

Message Text

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17/13

ORIGIN EUR-25

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O R 220120Z NOV 73

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BERN IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY VIENNA

CINCUSAFE

CINCEUR

CSAF

MAC

DIA

21AFCP

435 MASVWG RHEIN-MAIN AB

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 230434

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS:PFOR, MILI, SZ, GW, AU

SUBJECT: SWISS OVERFLIGHT CLEARANCES FOR USAF AIRCRAFT

REF: (A) BERN 4636; (B) USDAO/BERN 080825Z NOV. 73,
(C) USDAO/BERN 070900Z NOV. 3; (D) BERN 4504 (E) BERN
4486; (F) BERN A-433

1. IN ORDER TO BE ABLE TO RESUME USAF FLIGHTS OVER
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SWITZERLAND AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME

ENSURING THAT OUR SENSITIVE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP IS NOT IMPAIRED THROUGH ANY MISUNDERSTANDINGS ON THE SWISS SIDE, THE EMBASSY SHOULD EXPEDITIOUSLY SETTLE DETAILS OF RHEIN-MAIN OBSERVATION VISIT WITH DIRECTOR GULDIMANN ALONG LINES PROPOSED IN REFTEL A. IN THIS CONNECTION, THE EMBASSY SHOULD ASSURE GULDIMANN THAT THE RESTRICTIONS OF THE 1970 AGREEMENT HAVE BEEN SCRUPULOUSLY OBSERVED BY THE USAF, AND EXPLAIN THAT OVERFLIGHTS HAVE BEEN SUSPENDED VOLUNTARILY BY THE USAF SINCE NOVEMBER 5, PENDING THE RESOLUTION OF CERTAIN QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE INSPECTION ISSUE WHICH HIS COMMENTS OF NOVEMBER 13 (REFTEL A) HAVE NOW LARGELY ANSWERED.

2. ALTHOUGH WE ARE INTERESTED IN PRESERVING UNDIMINISHED RIGHTS TO CONTINUE THESE OVERFLIGHTS -- IF AT ALL POSSIBLE (THE USAF STATEMENT CITED IN PARA 5, REFTEL A, WAS INTENDED ONLY IN A RELATIVE SENSE; THE USAF FULLY APPRECIATES FUEL AND TIME-SAVING VALUE OF SWISS OVERFLIGHTS), THE US WOULD RELUCTANTLY SUSPEND THE EXERCISE OF THESE USEFUL RIGHTS (EVEN RISKING THEIR LAPSE) IF THE SWISS WERE EVER TO DECIDE TO PERFORM ACTIONS WHICH COULD BE CONSTRUED TO BE INSPECTIONS THROUGH: (A) OBSERVATION BY THIRD PARTIES, (B) COMMUNICATION WITH OTHER GOVERNMENTS, (C) PUBLIC PRONOUNCEMENTS. WHEN THE OVERFLIGHT ARRANGEMENT WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1970 THE SWISS THEN INDICATED THAT PUBLICITY WAS NOT DESIRED ON THEIR PART. THEN, AS NOW, OUR SPECIAL CONCERN HAS BEEN THAT PUBLICITY REGARDING ACTIONS THAT COULD BE CONSTRUED TO BE INSPECTIONS COULD RESULT IN DEMANDS BY OTHER COUNTRIES FOR INSPECTION OF USAF AIRCRAFT. (FYI: THIS CONSIDERATION IS ESPECIALLY SENSITIVE IN THE CASE OF NEIGHBORING AUSTRIA WHERE THE USAF HAS VERY VITAL OVERFLIGHT ARRANGEMENTS.) IN LIGHT OF DEVELOPMENTS REPORTED IN REF A, HOWEVER, USAF IS NOW AMENABLE TO EXPLORE WITH SWISS A GULDIMANN VISIT TO RHEIN-MAIN ALONG THE LINES INDICATED IN THAT MESSAGE.

3. WE WOULD WANT TO CONSIDER THE SWISS FEDERAL AIR OFFICE'S REACTION TO THE EMBASSY'S PRESENTATION BEFORE DECIDING ON FINAL ACTION. IN THIS CONNECTION, IT
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WOULD BE HELPFUL TO KNOW EXACTLY WHAT TYPE OF ACTION WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE TO THE SWISS ON VISIT TO RHEIN-MAIN -- AND WHAT KIND OF PUBLIC STATEMENT THEY INTEND TO MAKE, IF ANY. THE USG COULD ACCEPT A TEXT ALONG THE FOLLOWING LINES: "THE GOVERNMENT OF SWITZERLAND HAS LOOKED INTO THE MATTER OF USAF OVERFLIGHTS, AND IS ASSURED THAT THEY REPRESENT NO VIOLATION OF SWISS NEUTRALITY."

4. DEFENSE CONCURS KISSINGER

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NNN

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